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The Signal



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News UPDATE

Valid vehicle decals are a requirement

A reminder to all service members and authorized personnel possessing a valid Department of Defense decal. You are required to notify the Vehicle Registration Office when changing vehicle license plates on your vehicle.

Failure to do so could result in delays while attempting entry onto Fort Gordon or having your vehicle towed during heightened force protection condition measures. The Vehicle Registration Office is located in Darling Hall, Room 151.

Women's History Month

The command program for "Women's History Month" is **March 13**, at 1p.m. in Alexander Hall. The guest speaker for the program is Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Reserve, Command Sgt. Maj. Michele S. Jones.

For more information, call the Equal Opportunity Office at 791-2014/6455.

Caution prescribed for AKO users

Fort Gordon has recently been notified of organizations that offer soldiers and their families an emergency notification service in order to support military families. These web sites request service members' names, addresses and Social Security numbers as well as the names and addresses of family members and other privacy act information. The sites also request the service member provide the content of a message which is to be sent to family members.

These sites are not associated with the federal government and should not be trusted. The sites represent themselves as being owned by a not-for-profit corporation which means they have not filed for non-profit status and made the necessary disclosures.

Department of Defense personnel should not enter any personal information on a non-federal website for emergency notification of families or any other reason. Any information provided to these sites could be used for identity theft, intelligence gathering by foreign nations or terrorists and could pose a threat to service members, their families and their privacy.

While offers may be legitimate, in these days and times we cannot afford to send personal information through unauthorized channels. Soldiers should use the Army Knowledge Online as an official channel for communications between them and their family members.

249th General Hospital heads to Persian Gulf region

Denise Allen
Staff writer

A small contingent with the 249th General Hospital (Care-taker) will be headed to the Persian Gulf region.

An eight-member neurological team, which includes seven personnel from Eisenhower Army Medical Center and one from Walter Reed Army Medical Center, will be attached to a unit with the Third Medical Command somewhere in the Middle East.

"Within the next few weeks,

we'll be called to deploy," said Lt. Col. Rick Gullickson, 249th commander.

Gullickson said their exact location is unknown and is likely to change during the deployment.

"They are a mobile team and could be moved around the battlefield," he said.

The unit staffed with surgeons and supporting technicians will perform neurosurgery on soldiers who've sustained brain or spinal cord injuries, according to Lt. Col. David Floyd, one of the physicians on the team.

Team members are eager to assist soldiers who may encounter such injuries on the possible battlefield or through vehicle accidents.

"We're fighting for the greatest country in the world. I'll be glad to be with other soldiers and help them with neurological trouble," said Sgt. Avery Witter, the noncommissioned officer in charge and an operating room technical supervisor.

Gullickson said he could not comment on whether or not more deployments from the 249th were anticipated.

African-American history; military experience recounted

Spc. Ryan Matson
Staff writer

Soldiers at Fort Gordon were afforded the chance to hear first-hand the accounts of a man who not only knew African-American history, but also lived through it as well.

Clutching a cane as he spoke, 74-year-old retired Brig. Gen. Frank C. Bacon Jr., delivered a speech filled with both humor and inspiration in Alexander Hall Feb. 24. It drew from his vast array of personal experiences, including his accounts of growing up in segregated times and as a black officer in the military.

"I was asked to come here and give a speech on the military and the soul of African-Americans," he said. "I said that oughta be pretty easy - I've been black for a long time!"

Bacon said he started his military career when he enlisted in the Air Corps during World War II in 1945, and continued for a couple of years of service in the Air Force, which is where he said he learned how he could become an officer.

"I was a private in Wichita Family forum: Army Family Action Plan holds annual conference on post, Kan., cleaning up after an officer party," he recalled.

"There were empty bottles of alcohol here and there and a few remnants of ladies being up there. I said, this looks pretty good to me!"

Bacon attended West Virginia State where he participated in the Reserve Officer Training Course program.

The ROTC recruiter had told Bacon about the program, saying it had many advantages.

Bacon said he asked the recruiter what these advantages were.

"You get \$27 a month," the recruiter told him.

"Sign me up!" Bacon said he told the man.

Bacon pursued his goal and became an officer. He served as an artillery lieutenant in the Korean War.

When all was said and done, Bacon had accumulated 34 years of service in the United States Army, both on active duty and Reserve status, and attained the rank of brigadier general. He commanded aviation and artillery troops, and served as the chief intelligence officer for the Army Reserves in Illinois, Wisconsin, and parts of Michigan.

Bacon continues his strive for excellence to this day. At 74, he said he will be finishing his third masters degree this year.

One message Bacon offered to the soldiers of all races and ethnic origins who packed Alexander Hall was "don't give up, keep on striving."



Photo by Spc. Ryan Matson

Retired Brig. Gen. Frank C. Bacon Jr. receives the audience's applause following his speech and recognition by Brig. Gen. Jan Hicks, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon's commanding general.

He said he had held what one would call many "striving jobs" during his life as a young black man including waiter, police officer and school teacher. He later went on to such prominent positions as di-

"I'm happy to say that it seems like the Army, which was the leader in social reconstruction and affirmative action continues to do a good job of it."

- Retired Brig. Gen. Frank C. Bacon Jr.

rector of manpower for the city of Chicago, director of community relations for Sears and Roebuck, president and CEO of two wholesale food distributors, and staff assistant for Cook County State's Attorney.

He said he carried the advice of one of his fellow general officers while working at all these jobs

- "Be so good at what you do, that they need you."

He also gave credit to the Army for being a leader in social reform.

"I'm happy to say that it seems like the Army, which was the leader in social reconstruction and affirmative action continues to do a good job of it," he said.

In an interview following his speech, Bacon said he believes the Army is producing a better group of soldiers now more than ever.

He remembered how things changed over his military career, such as when he was a second lieutenant at Fort Sill and was unable to go to the officer's club, instead only being allowed to be an honorary member of the noncommissioned officer's club.

He said with the Integration Act of 1948, slow change came to the military.

"What I'm saying, group, is prior to that we had distinct all black units and distinct all white units," he said. "That's the way it was. People now look at me like it's hard to believe, and it was hard to believe we were so stupid. What a waste of valuable manpower. But these changes came about during my lifetime."

Still Bacon reiterated that the military has been very good to him.

"I've been getting a retire-

See **Bacon**, Page 2



Photo by Spc. Ryan Matson

'Read Across America' celebrates Dr. Suess' birthday with area students

U.S. Signal Center and Fort Gordon Commanding General Brig. Gen. Jan Hicks participated in the 'Read Across America' program and celebrated children's storybook author, Dr. Suess's birthday as she read to students at Tobacco Road Elementary. The students were interested and animated participants as Hicks read from Dr. Suess' *Oh the Places You'll Go* book. She added from her own experiences of traveling with the military to the book's story and talked of all the places they may go in their life. She told them not to be afraid.

See Page 10A for more photos and the rest of the story.

Great American Yard Sale March 22 promises unique opportunity to seek treasure

Denise Allen
Staff writer

A post-wide yard sale dubbed "The Great American Yard Sale" will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 22.

Individual yard sales are "not practical on a routine basis," said Tom Fitzpatrick, Fort Gordon's director of operations, on the reason behind the large scale event.

Yard sales will take place in Gordon Terrace, Maglin Terrace, Olive Terrace and McNair Terrace giving buyers the opportunity to purchase unique merchandise originally bought overseas.

The Great American Yard Sale will be open to the general public.

Family readiness groups and unit support groups will be able to use the Great American Yard Sale to sell concessions as a way to raise

money for their activities.

Fitzpatrick said these groups are of great importance especially now that Fort Gordon has so many units deployed.

Special activities for family members help to relieve some of the stress associated with having a family member deployed, he said.

There will be extra security at the gates to ease traffic flow. Gates 1, 2 and 5 will be open for yard sale traffic.

Designated parking will be set up outside each of the housing areas to prevent congestion within the neighborhoods. If someone purchases a large item that needs to be loaded closer to the home, the seller will give the purchaser a pass so the person may bring the vehicle into the neighborhood.

For more information about the yard sale, call 791-9841 or 791-5323.





Defending against Iraqi chemical biological threats

Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — If Saddam Hussein decides to use chemical or biological weapons against U.S. forces, he may well kill or injure more of his own forces than Americans.

“The United States fields the best-trained and best-equipped forces in the world,” said Army Maj. Gen. John Doesburg, commander of Soldier Biological and Chemical Defense Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. “The Iraqi capability is extremely limited. We have — and I don’t want to overstate it — a hundred percent better capability to operate in a chemical and biological environment than the Iraqis do.”

Doesburg, along with Army Brig. Gen. Stephen Reeves and Army Col. Thomas Spoehr, answered questions about chemical and biological defenses today during a Pentagon press meeting. Reeves is DoD’s program executive officer for chemical and biological defense. Spoehr is commander of the 3rd Chemical Brigade at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

The men said that Iraqi forces being endangered by their own weapons of mass destruction doesn’t mean Hussein won’t use them anyway.

“You can never forget the fact that he used them in the past,” Doesburg said. “Inside his mind is something that says, against everything we know and everything we feel in the world, that it’s OK to use chemical agents, because he’s done it.”

The general said Hussein did not use chemical weapons against the coalition in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. “He probably has some grave reservations about using those chemical and biological agents, but we’re going to be prepared,” he said.

When the Iraqis used chemical agents against Iran and the Kurds in the 1980s, they used them in the “classic” way. He said they placed persistent agents along the front line and nonpersistent agents along any axis of attack. He expects that if used today, the Iraqis might try something different.

But U.S. troops are trained to operate in such environments. Spoehr said there are 15,000 nuclear, biological and chemical specialists at all levels of the Army. These specialists train fellow soldiers how to operate in an NBC environment. They also advise commanders on defensive actions. In addition, there are specialized chemical and biological defense units at division and corps levels.

“The training they get is rigorous and demanding,” Spoehr said. “They learn how to operate and maintain equipment, the properties of the agents and how to predict hazardous areas.”

Every service member must successfully complete

training at the Chemical Defense Training Facility — “the Super Bowl of chemical training.” They train with toxic agents and with the equipment they will use in the field.

There have been many changes to the chemical and biological agent defense equipment since the Gulf War. “We have put out 19 new systems over the past few years. These include chemical and biological agent detectors, new individual protection systems ... new collected protection systems, new decontamination systems and new reconnaissance systems,” Reeves said.

During the Gulf War, one persistent problem was chemical and biological detectors often rang with false alarms. “We learned our lessons from the Gulf War,” Reeves said. “Alarms often reacted to some battlefield contaminants like diesel fuel, JP-8 and insecticides. Based on that, we developed the automatic chemical agent alarm. It’s more sensitive and has been tested against more than 80 battlefield ‘interferents.’”

Reeves said this wouldn’t totally eliminate false alarms. “We may still get 1 or 2 percent false alarms,” he said. “But it’s a great improvement.”

Reeves and Doesburg also addressed a report indicating that 250,000 chemical suits were defective. “What we’ve issued is the Joint Service Light-weight Suit Technology to those who are deployed,” Doesburg said. “In that report, they were referring to the battle dress overgarment, which is another suit that we had.”

The new suits are up to snuff and in fact are lighter and less hot than the older battledress overgarment. While the BDO is still in inventory, it serves as a back up to the new suits. “If we have to issue some of those BDOs, ... we will inspect every one of them before they are issued to any soldier, sailor, airman or Marine,” Reeves said.

Bacon

From Page 1

ment check for 15 years,” he said “A lot of people don’t get a retirement check for that long, and I don’t plan to retire anytime soon! I still get goosebumps whenever I hear the national anthem played.”

He said in the interview that he believed African-American/Black History Month is important for recognizing the contributions of African-Americans to society as a whole.

“We’re pretty good at what we do, and now we’re getting our due,” he said.

Bacon said he has carried over the lessons he learned during his 34-plus years of military service to his current duties as the superintendent of the Chicago Military Academy-Bronzeville, a public school which incorporates military philosophy.

“The motif is ‘Yes sir’, ‘No Sir,’ and ‘You’re right sir,’” he said. “People ask how we handle discipline problems, and I tell them most discipline problems are handled before they get started because of our philosophy.”

Following Bacon’s speech, the program had an added attraction. Professional actress Raqi Barnette delivered a reading of the poem “Negro Mother,” by an unknown author.

In her speech introducing Bacon, Hicks said by honoring African-American month, people can remember the past, and ensure the tragedies of yesterday are not repeated.

“By honoring this day, we can be better neighbors, co-workers and even strangers,” Hicks said.



Photo by Spc. Ryan Matson

Actress Raqi Barnette delivered a reading of the poem “Negro Mother,” by an unknown author following Bacon’s speech at the Black History Month command program.

BUCKLE
UP FOR
SAFETY

Homeland security guide lists everyday measures

Jamie Danesi
Army News Service

ATLANTA, Ga— A new online guide answers questions that many Americans had about the Homeland Security Advisory System, a color-coded system that depicts the current risk of terrorist activity.

The American Red Cross recently developed the on-line publication, “Homeland Security and You: A Guide to Disaster Preparedness.” It lists specific things that people can do to prepare their families, schools, communities, and businesses for each level in the advisory system.

“We thought it would be helpful to the American public to answer the inevitable question as to ‘What does going to orange or red mean to me or my family?’” said Carol Hall, manager of Red Cross’ Weapons of Mass Destruction/Terrorism Program.

Family disaster plan

The first thing every individual and family should do is develop a disaster plan and assemble a disaster kit, according to the guide. The plan should cover such information as:

- What community warning signals sound like
- Whether emergency shelters allow pets
- What disaster plans are in place at family members’ schools and workplaces
- Where to meet if family members become separated during an emergency
- An out-of-state family contact person
- How to shut of gas and water lines to the house
- Escape routes from the house
- How to use fire extinguishers

The plan should be practiced every few months to ensure that everyone is familiar with it.

As part of the overall plan, families should assemble disaster kits. The disaster kit should contain enough water and non-perishable food for every family member for at least three days. The kit should also include:

- A first-aid kit
- Hand tools
- Cash or traveler’s checks
- Personal hygiene items
- At least one complete

change of clothing and footwear per person

- Extra glasses or contact lenses
- Prescription drugs
- Important family documents

Specific Steps for the Advisory System

The disaster plan and supplies kit are just the first step in preparing yourself and your family for the possibility of a terrorist attack. Red Cross has additional recommendations for each level of the Advisory System.

Green-Low Risk of Terrorist Attack

Learn basic first aid and CPR

Examine volunteer opportunities in your community and choose an agency that provides disaster preparedness training

Blue-Guarded; General Risk of Terrorist Attack

Be alert to suspicious activity and report it to proper authorities

Review stored disaster supplies and replace items that are outdated

Volunteer and take advantage of additional volunteer training opportunities

Yellow-Elevated; Significant Risk of Terrorist Attack

Check telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in your personal communication plan and update as necessary

Develop alternate routes to and from work and school and practice using them

Contact your child’s school and obtain its emergency notification and evacuation plans

Continue volunteering and taking additional training

Orange-High Risk of Terrorist Attack

Review your personal disaster plan and update as required.

Have materials on hand in case you are confined to your home during a disaster.

If a need is announced, donate blood at a blood collection center.

Prior to engaging in volunteer activities, contact the agency to determine its needs.

Red-Severe Risk of Terrorist Attack

ist Attack

□ Listen to radio/television for current information and instructions.

□ Contact your office to determine the status of your work day or site.

□ Obey any travel restrictions announced by local government authorities.

□ Be prepared to “shelter in place” or evacuate if instructed to do so by local authorities.

□ Provide volunteer services only as requested.

Volunteering

One recommendation the Red Cross lists for several of the advisory system levels is volunteering with local agencies that respond to disasters. This training not only can help the community as a whole if a disaster situation occurs, but it can help individuals feel more capable of their abilities to respond to disasters of any kind.

There are many organizations from which you can choose when considering volunteering. The American Red Cross, of course, provides disaster relief services and offers classes both at military installations and in the community. Check with your local chapter for more information.

Another option is the Citizen Corps, one of several citizen-service organizations initiated by President Bush. The Citizen Corps is coordinated nationally by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; state Citizen Corps councils are coordinated by state emergency management agencies. Citizen Corps has several volunteer programs including Citizen Corps Councils, Neighborhood Watch Programs, Volunteers in Police Service, the Community Emergency Response Team and the Medical Reserve Corps.

A third option for volunteer organizations is the Civil Air Patrol, the civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. Created in 1941, the Civil Air Patrol has a great deal of experience with emergency services missions. Homeland security operations are a new area of responsibility for this organization.

These are just a few examples of volunteer opportunities. Investigate your local community for other options. Even if you decide not to volunteer, the guide states that disaster preparedness training you obtain from these or other organizations can be invaluable

if a disaster or terrorist attack occurs. The important thing to know is that individual citizens are not helpless. There are things that can be done to prepare families and communities for a worst-case scenario. Developing disaster plans, assembling disaster kits and following the Red Cross’ recommendations for actions to take at various terrorist threat levels are things that everyone can do to help ensure the safety of families, communities and the nation.

Resources:

American Red Cross Publications:

Terrorism: Preparing for the Unexpected
Your Family Disaster Supplies Kit
Your Family Disaster Plan

Web resources:

American Red Cross - <http://www.redcross.org>
Civil Air Patrol - <http://www.cap.gov>
Citizen Corps - <http://www.citizencorps.gov>
Department of Homeland Security - <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic>
Federal Emergency Management Agency - <http://www.fema.gov>

Editor’s note: *Jamie Danesi is with U.S. Army Forces Command Public Affairs. Information taken from “Homeland Security and You: A Guide to Disaster Preparedness” at <http://www.redcrossatlanta.org/homelandsecurity>.” Red Cross information used with permission.*

Lieutenants can get waiver for college degree

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Lieutenants who graduated from Officer Candidate School can now submit a waiver to gain an additional two years to obtain their baccalaureate degree.

Title 10 of the U.S. Code (Section 12205) states that no officer can be appointed to a grade above first lieutenant in the Army Reserve, or be federally recognized above first lieutenant in the Army National Guard, unless awarded a baccalaureate degree from a qualifying institution. The provision applies to active-component officers as well. The secretary of the Army, however, may temporarily waive the baccalaureate degree requirement on a case-by-case basis for any officer who was commissioned through Army OCS. The waiver may be in effect for no more than two years after the waiver is granted, according to a U.S. Army Personnel Command message.

Deployments could be used as a reason for not being able to complete the college degree in time, according to personnel officials. With the large number of current deployments, the PERSCOM promotions branch posted a message about the waiver process online Feb. 21.

Upon completion of the baccalaureate degree, officers must provide documented proof to their branch assignment officer. Documented proof of a baccalaureate degree must be an official college transcript.

Lt. Col. Doug McCallum, the Infantry branch chief at PERSCOM, said there are at least a dozen Infantry lieutenants that require the waiver. Other branches have lieutenants who need to submit the waiver, as well, personnel officials said.

“We’re working on their waiver paperwork for them and notifying these officers accordingly,” said McCallum.

Many of the Lieutenants that the two-year waiver applies to are currently deployed.

Information about the waiver process can be found at:

<https://www.perscom.army.mil/select/CivEdRequirements.htm>

Editor’s note: *Information provided by the G-1 Public Affairs office.*

Heath Award presented to EAMC oncology staff nurse for dedication

Jennifer M. Chipman
EAMC Public Affairs

The 3rd Annual Col. William “Mike Heath” Award was presented to Maria J. Lopez, staff nurse, Oncology, Eisenhower Army Medical Center, during a ceremony March 3.

The Heath Award was established in 1999 in honor of Col. Mike Heath, chief of the Pharmacy at the time. Heath was the driving force in the renovation of the pharmacy, including the concierge desk and the satellite pharmacy located in the Main Post Exchange mall. His commitment to excellence in patient care led to the establishment of this award as well as his being awarded the 1st Annual Heath Award in 1999.

To be considered for this award the person must a member of the EAMC staff, fulltime employee, work directly in patient care or in support of those who provide patient care, and must exemplify the ideals of selfless service to others by putting the patient first.

“Lopez is an excellent nurse, learning oncology nursing very quickly and excelling at taking care of patients,” said Maj. Teresa Coleman, Department of Medicine staff physician. But Lopez’s nursing skills are not why she deserves this award.



Photo by Jennifer Chipman

Maria Lopez, this year’s winner of the Mike Heath Award, works with patients in the Oncology Clinic every day. She is well known for her dedication to her work as is evidenced by the times she works after duty hours or on weekends taking care of her patients.

“Her willingness to go the extra mile for the patient at her own personal expense is what separates her from others,” said Coleman.

Lopez said she had wanted

to be a nurse since she was a young girl and that her 15 years spent with the military as a nurse have been very gratifying.

“Everyday is a new day for

me and for my patients,” said Lopez.

Brig. Gen. Eric Schoomaker, commanding general Southeast Regional Medical Command and Eisenhower Army Medical Center presented the Heath plaque to Lopez.

The plaque has her name engraved on it along with the past two winners, Heath and Debbie Lastimoza from the Pharmacy.

Along with this prestigious award, Lopez was also awarded the Commander’s Award for Civilian Service by Schoomaker during the ceremony.

“This means a lot to me especially coming from my peers, the beautiful people I work with every single day,” Lopez said.

Lopez was among 11 nominees for this prestigious award. The nominees included: Mirenda Armenta, Department of Social Work, Carol Carter, Department of Medicine, Christopher Daniel, Information Management Division, Beverly Hoskins-Jones, Department of Mental Health, Lynda Long, Pharmacy, Maj. Joan O’Neal, Family Practice, Rose Reedy, Information Management, James Scott, Department of Surgery, Sgt. 1st Class Jacquelyn Tuggle, Troop Command and Janis Whaley, Managed Care.

Smoke alarms can save your life

Consumer Product Safety Commission

Smoke alarms are tools that can tell if there is smoke in the air. They work even if you can’t smell smoke. A smoke alarm looks like a small dish or dinner plate on the ceiling of your home!

A smoke alarm makes a very loud beeping noise to warn you that a fire has started. When you hear the loud noise, follow your home escape plan and get out fast. Kids can help make their homes safer from fire by helping grown-ups remember to:

Put smoke alarms in your home, especially near bedrooms.

Check smoke alarms monthly to make sure they are working, and so you’ll know what it sounds like when it goes off.

Replace old batteries with brand new ones at least once a year.

Keep smoke alarms clean from dust. You can clean away the dust by running the vacuum cleaner attachment over and around them.

Smoke alarms

- warn you in time to escape from a fire

The best place for your smoke alarms

- outside the bedroom areas
- each level in the home
- in each sleeping room

Take care of them

- test monthly
- replace batteries once a year or when they make a “chirping” sound

To prevent nuisance alarms

- clean the alarm following the manufacturer’s instructions

What is family child care?

Family child care is child care provided in government quarters by an adult family member for children other than their own.

Both the individual providing the services, FCC Provider, and the occupied housing unit will be certified by Child and Youth Services prior to initiation of child care services.

FCC is responsive to the needs of individual families and children in an



informal family style setting and is suitable for children of different ages in various group configurations. It is often more appropriate for infants needing small

group care and for school age children who require care in a neighborhood setting. FCC homes also offer families with

special needs alternative child care options, which may be unavailable in center-based programs.

For more information about the Family Child Care Program, call 791-3993/4440.

Recycle
The Signal --
pass it to a friend

Stop Loss changes ACAP process

Army Career and Alumni Program

The Army has announced a new Stop Loss action that will extend the term of service for deployed/deploying soldiers until further notice.

In the past ACAP used the SIDPERS loss roster to identify all service members who had a scheduled separation date of 12 months or less remaining on their current enlistment. Separating service members, scheduled to separate within 12 months, and their commanders were sent an individual letter to notify them of the requirement to receive pre-separation counseling as early as possible, but not later than 90 days prior to their separation. The ACAP will no longer notify all service members

and commanders of the soldier’s eligibility to receive the pre-separation counseling.

Soldiers and their commanders, assigned to units that are not deployed or deploying will continue to receive individual notification of the soldier’s eligibility to participate in pre-separation counseling not later than 90 days prior to their separation. Soldiers and their commanders assigned to deployed/deploying units will not be individually notified.

Commanders of non-deploying units are reminded that OPTEMPO does not negate the requirement to involve soldiers in timely ACAP services, nor the congressional intent to allow retiring soldiers to use ACAP services up to two years before retirement and non-retiring soldiers to use ACAP

services up to one year before separation.

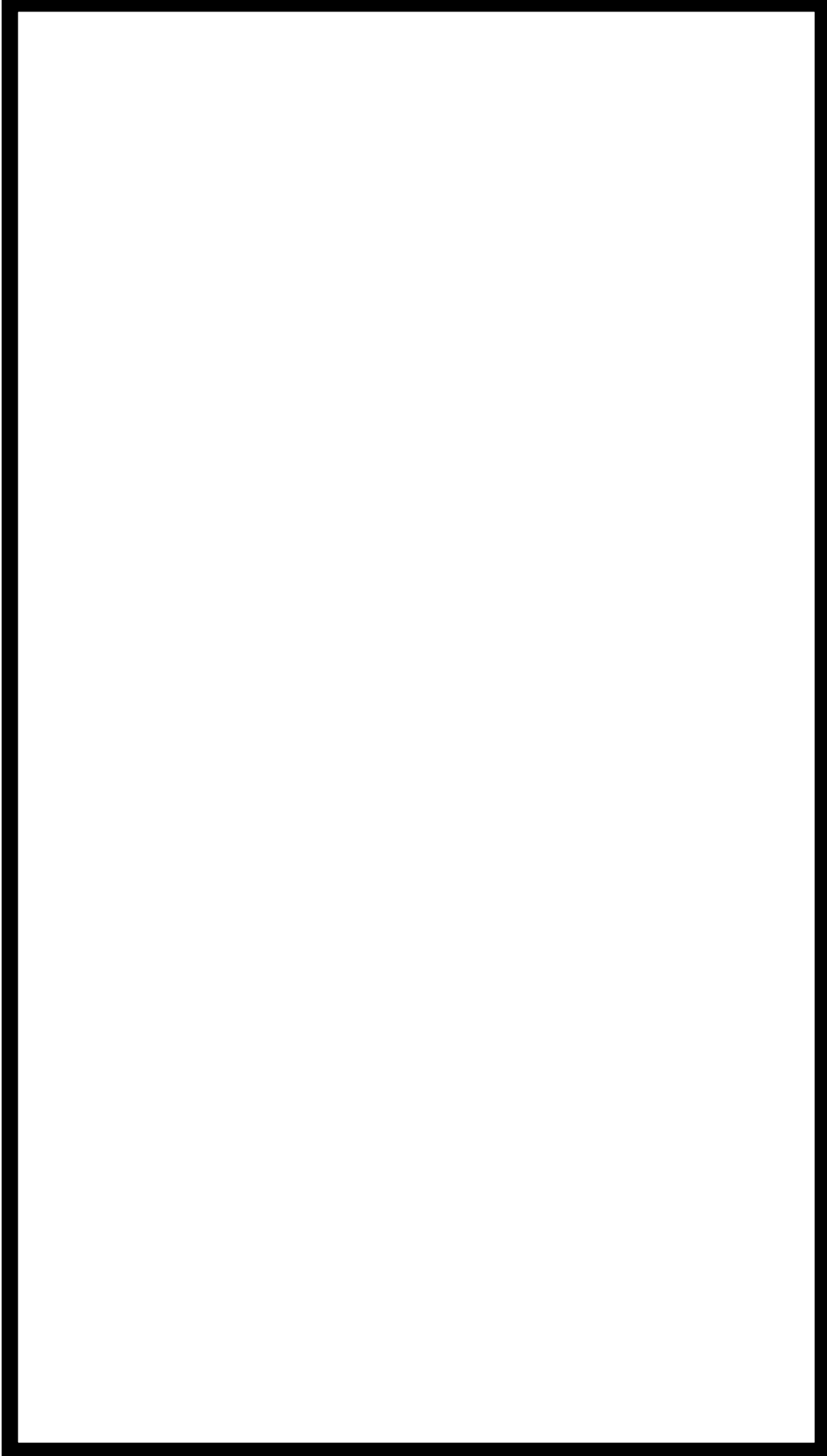
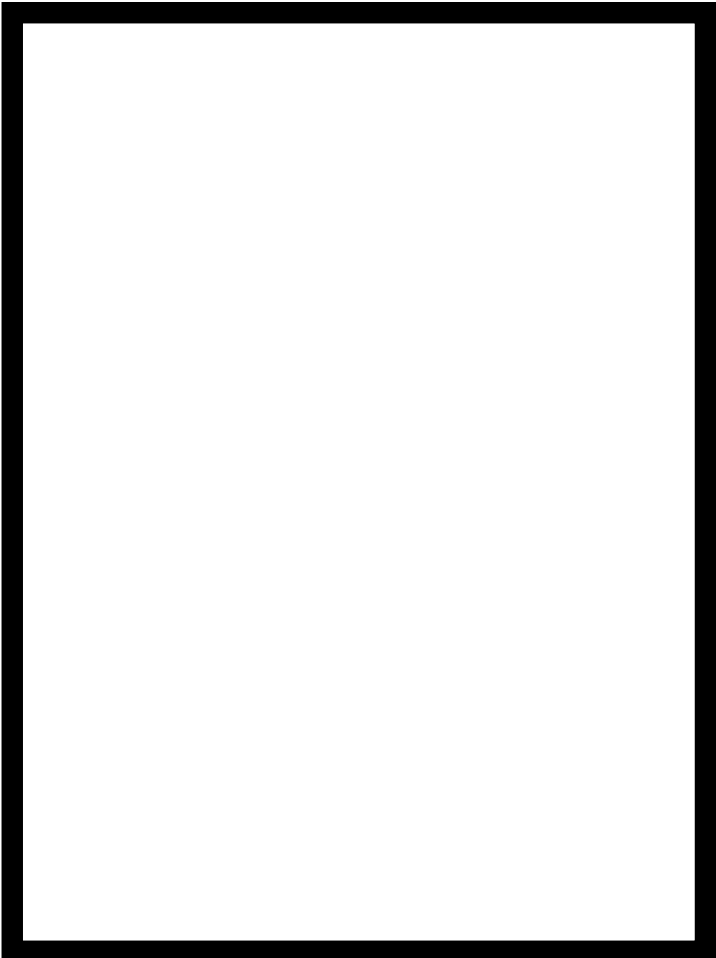
Soldiers deployed/deploying need not wait for their return to Fort Gordon to begin their transition planning and preparation. Deployed soldiers may use the Army’s ACAP online web site www.acap.army.mil to access important information and links to other web resources.

Soldiers who are eligible for ACAP services may communicate directly with the ACAP Center by email in order to secure answers to questions and further assistance. The email address is zillsji@gordon.army.mil.

For additional information contact Jim Zills, 706-791-2009 or email zillsji@gordon.army.mil.

Give the gift of life -
Be a blood donor

For more information on becoming a blood donor, call 787-3432.



Family forum: Army Family Action Plan holds annual conference on post

Spc. Ryan Matson
Staff writer

"The Army recruits soldiers, but retains families," Lynn Harshman, the director of the 2003 Army Family Action Plan conference here on post said.

Harshman was explaining AFAP, and its importance as an organization for soldiers on post.

"It is a grass roots program that was developed as a result of an Army white paper that came out in 1983 entitled 'The Family'," Harshman said.

"At that time, it was identified that happy families equal happy soldiers, and that perhaps the Army needed to do a better job with Army programs and services since a larger percentage of our military folks were married."

The result of the paper was AFAP, which looks to resolve issues involving Army families and provide additional programs and services where needed. Harshman said that since nearly 62-percent of soldiers are married, Army Family Action Plan is especially important.

Harshman explained that every Army installation world-wide holds its own AFAP conference. This year's Fort Gordon AFAP conference was held Feb. 26 to 27 at the Reserve Center on 15th Street.

The goal of the conference was to help provide possible answers for quality of life issues that have been raised on post, Harshman said.

"We gathered quality of life issues that we have gotten from the folks at Fort Gordon," Harshman said. "The people in the conference were then assigned to different work group sessions, each one focusing on a different aspect of quality of life on the installation. This year our four work groups were entitled Force Support, Family Support, Infrastructure, and Medical and Customer Service."

From these four work group categories, Harshman said a total of 45 issues were

raised to be discussed. She said each work group was comprised of a variety of different representatives to make sure a multitude of views and opinions were considered in the conference.

"We made sure we had groups with active-duty enlisted, active-duty officer, family-member enlisted, family-member officer, Reservists, National Guard and DA civilian delegates in there," she said.

"We even had youth. We had some teen delegates from both West Side High School and Davidson Fine Arts School who are military family members."

Each group was made up of 10 to 12 delegates, Harshman said. The delegates were chosen based on being selected or identified to fit a category by units on post, she said. Family readiness group leaders, the retiree council on post and Reserve and National Guard units were also contacted to help select delegates, she said. Ads were also placed in *The Signal* to help generate delegates.

"We did the best job we could to make sure we had representatives from all of our folks out there," Harshman said.

The process of gathering people from the work groups began in November 2002, Harshman said. About 85 people, including delegates, volunteers and subject matter experts who were also selected to help provide information to help the delegates resolve issues,

participated in this year's conference, Harshman said. She said the groups met from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day.

She said the debates sometimes were intense over the two days, but as issues are resolved the groups usually grow closer.

"There are three natural progressions to the work groups," she said, "the forming, the storming and the norming."

At the end of the conference, two delegates from each work group presented resolutions the group had offered to the post's upper chain of command, Harshman said.

So what happened to issues that couldn't be resolved at this year's conference? Harshman explained how the AFAP program will handle these issues.

"Those issues that have merit and could be resolved at the installation level were done so. Those issues that have merit and Army-wide impact and are beyond the scope and the authority of the installation commander to resolve then go to the next higher level, such as the Southeast Region for us."

Harshman said these mid-level groups go through the same process, and issues beyond that advance to the Department of the Army conference, where there is representation from every installation. Last year, the Fort Gordon installation representative was Sgt. Demetrius Dowell from the

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program, she said.

At the DA level conference, the General Officer Steering Committee is tasked with resolving the issues. She said the website www.army.mwr.com lists the issues.

"If you go there, you can see the more than 500 AFAP issues that have been entered since 1984, and it will show you the year and current status of these issues," she said.

"The majority of these issues have been resolved and it will also list which ones are unattainable or still open. In the case of open issues, usually they're waiting on more funding, or a public law or DA reg to be changed."

Harshman said the conference each year is important because it shows the Army really does care about its military families.

"I think it would be terribly frustrating for people on post to feel like 'Gosh, why doesn't somebody change this, why doesn't somebody do something about this?'" she said. "I'm here to tell that this process works. I've had the opportunity to facilitate at a DA level conference, and so I know that it's taken very seriously at the top levels. This is an opportunity for people who are living and breathing the Army every day to voice their opinions. They kind of get to mark the report card. Brig. Gen. Hicks has made it a point in her staff

meetings, particularly in the last six weeks, to say she wants good representation at this conference, because she wants to know what folks on post want."

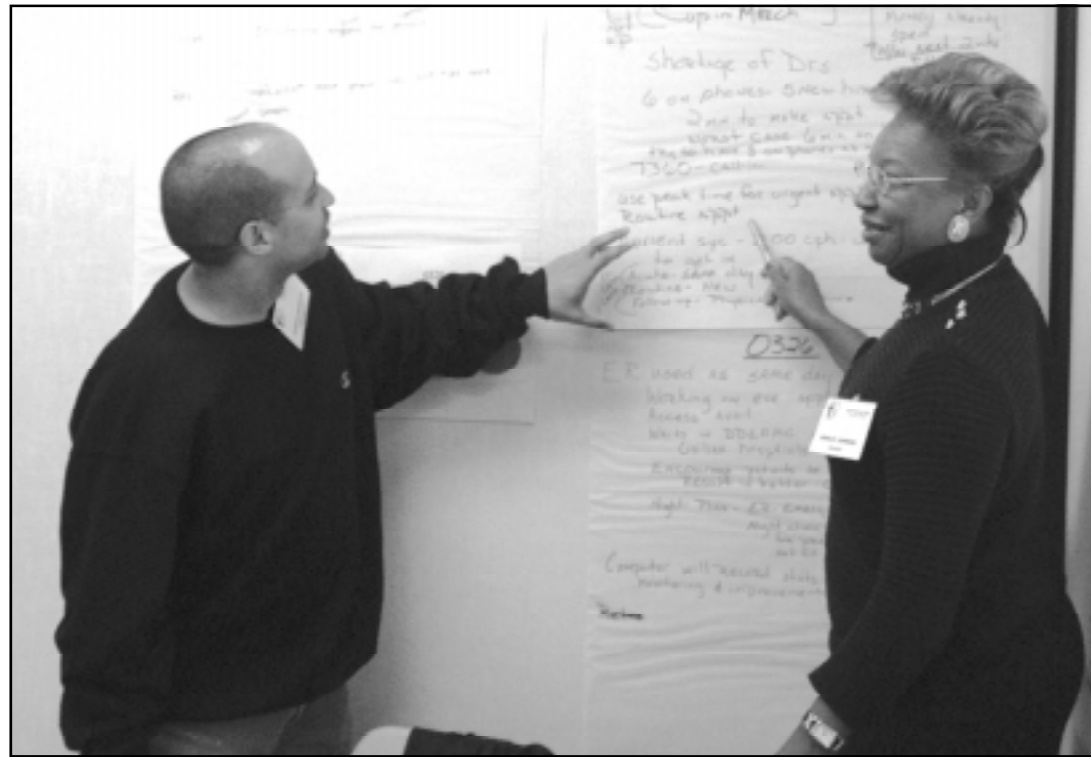
Kevin O'Neil, one of the delegates chosen as a group representative, said the process seemed to work.

"It was a good process to take issues from the installation, and to compile the issues, clarify the issues and then work toward solutions to the issues," he said. "It looked to be a very effective process. There was a lot of command emphasis based on what's going on here, and I think there will be a lot of good results that come out of this."



Photo by Spc. Ryan Matson

Carrie Ann Starnes (left) leads her work group in a group motto during the final day of the 2003 Army Family Action Plan conference at the U.S. Army Reserve Center on post. Below: Patrick Hairston and Shirley Johnson, look over some of the many issues concerning quality of life on post that their work group discussed.



Members of Group IV talk over issues during the conference. Forty-five issues concerning post living for all people on post were debated by the work groups, who recommended resolutions to these issues.

Helpful hints from the Fort Gordon Tax Center

Capt. Raashid S. Williams

Fort Gordon Tax Center

The following information is compiled from information provided by the Internal Revenue Service.

As you prepare to file your taxes, determine if there are any recent changes that might affect you.

Keep in mind, the Fort Gordon Tax Center is open and located on 419 B Street. Hours of operation are from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please see your Unit Tax Advisor for further details.

Student loan interest deduction:

The student loan interest deduction is more valuable for tax-year 2002: Taxpayers can deduct up to \$2,500. The student loan interest deduction is not an itemized deduction, and

taxpayers do not have to itemize to qualify for this deduction. The benefit of the student loan interest deduction is that you may be able to reduce the amount of your income that is subject to tax by up to \$2,500 for 2002.

For more information see IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Higher Education.

The earned income credit: The refundable EIC is available to certain low-income individuals who have earned income, meet adjusted gross income thresholds, and do not have more than a certain amount of investment income. Beginning in 2002, for EIC, the total of investment income (such as taxable interest and dividends, tax-exempt interest, and capital gain net income) must be less than \$2,550. The taxpayer's earned income and adjusted gross income must be less than: (This total income DOES NOT

include BAH or BAS)
a) \$29,201 (\$30,201 if married filing jointly) if he or she has one qualifying child.
b) \$33,178 (\$34,178 if married filing jointly) if he or she has more than one qualifying child.

For more information, see *IRS Publication 596, Earned Income Credit*, or *IRS Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax Guide 2002, chapter 37*.

Personal exemptions:

The deduction for each personal exemption has increased to \$3,000 for 2002.

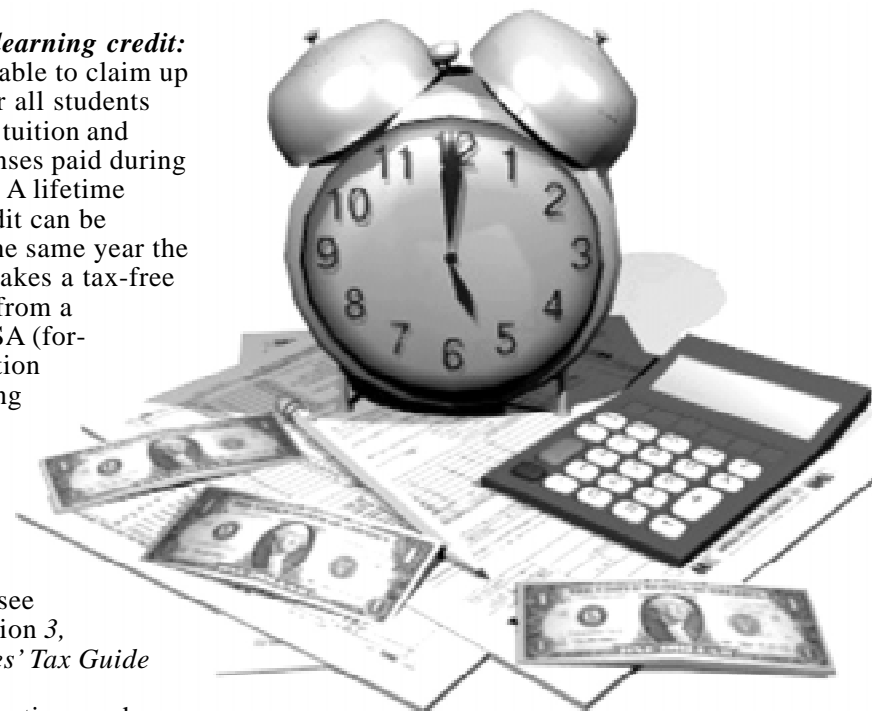
Standard mileage rate:

The standard mileage rate for operating your car has increased to 36.5 cents per mile for all business miles driven. The standard mileage rate for operating your car to get medical care and moving increased to 13 cents a mile.

Lifetime learning credit:

You may be able to claim up to \$1,000 for all students for qualified tuition and related expenses paid during the tax year. A lifetime learning credit can be claimed in the same year the beneficiary takes a tax-free distribution from a Coverdell ESA (formerly education IRAs), as long as the same expenses are not used for both benefits. For more information see IRS Publication 3, *Armed Forces' Tax Guide*

IRS Publications and further tax information can be found on line at <http://www.irs.gov>.



Tax time nears: April 15

Dust storms blow through Kuwait camps

Spc. Jacob Boyer
Army News Service

CAMPNEWYORK, Kuwait — Soldiers found themselves cleaning their gear after the third dust storm in as many weeks left a coat of sand covering the camps in northern Kuwait Feb. 25.

“I couldn’t see five feet in front of me,” said Spc. Jose Loya, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Division (Mech.) fueler from El Paso, Texas. “But you’ve just got to suck it up and drive on.”

Gusts of up to 29 knots made seeing difficult as virtual walls of sand swept through living areas.

“The biggest factor (in the storms) is the gusty winds,” said Maj. Dave Coxwell, 15th Air Support Operations Squadron weather flight commander. “It’s very dependent on the seasons. In this season, you can see high winds every day, and a storm like this maybe once every 10 days.”

There are many problems associated with the storms, but one of the biggest is eye protection, said Coxwell, a Savannah, Ga., native.

“If you can’t see, you can’t fight,” he said. “Right now the big issue is visibility. It negatively impacts all kinds of operations, particularly flight.”

“When the dust rolls in, you’ve got to put your goggles on and find whatever breathing protection you’ve got,” said Spc. Austin Boone, HHC, 123rd Signal Battalion



Photo by 3rd Infantry Division

Humvees move cautiously during a dust storm Feb. 25. Gusts of up to 29 knots stirred up sand and cut down visibility.

information systems technician.

Technical equipment, such as computers, is very vulnerable in a dust storm, said Boone, who is from Alexandria, Va. Many soldiers wrap their gear in clear plastic bags so work can continue without ruining the equipment.

“Sand gets into everything,” Coxwell said. “It’s either laptops failing or just everything getting covered in it.”

Recent storms have also damaged tents around the camps. One of the dining facilities at Camp New York has had one of its walls collapse twice, and other tents have completely collapsed.

Once the storms pass, cleanup begins.

“Our office has an air compressor,” Boone said. “We go around and clean everybody’s computers and tables. You’ve got to get the

dust out as quickly as you can.”

Boone, who was in Kuwait last summer during 3rd Brigade’s rotation, said the recent storms are only the beginning.

“We haven’t even seen the real dust storms yet,” he said. We’ll see them in a few months. You can’t see anything.”

The gusts in Kuwait in March average about 34 knots, Coxwell said.

Dust storms can affect a soldier’s day in other ways beyond the impact on equipment.

“These dust storms are kind of like a rainy day back in the States,” Boone said. “You know the day’s going to be sluggish, you don’t want to go outside, and you don’t want to do any work.”

Editor’s note: *Spc. Jacob Boyer is a member of the 3rd Infantry Division public affairs team.*

Lent: what will we give up?

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Thom Davies
93rd Signal Brigade Chaplain

“*And He said, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*” - Genesis 22: 2

“Is Kimmie going to die? I need to know.”

“I can’t answer that question,” Dr. Rubenstein said. “She has a good chance, if her body starts responding to treatment.”

A young mother is faced with what seems like a death sentence for her toddler. Kimmie has been sick most of her 16 months of life. It all started with a normal runny nose or ear infection like any other childhood illness, but the symptoms just did not go away.

The lab reports simply told of missing white blood cells that were not fighting the infections. Gamma globulin injections started but they just kept the baby on an even keel.

Kimmie was in constant pain from the injections and infections. Her mother, Terry, could not sleep for fear of the unknown and the possibility that Kimmie would slip away in her sleep.

What were the young parents to do? They had prayed, the church had prayed. The medical community offered no answers

or real hope.

Terry turned to God, but God did not seem responsive to her pleas and protests.

In her darkest hour, with her hands in dishwater, scrubbing the life out of a fry pan, these verses from Genesis 22 came to mind.

Was God asking for her to sacrifice her daughter to Him on a distant mountaintop? She could only be sure that God was asking where her devotions lie. Had God become a distant third in her life? She came to realize the answer. She had been doing all the “right” things, trying to manipulate God into giving her what she wanted.

“Could I still love God and call Him, “Master.” if He took my tiny daughter? Would hatred and bitterness fill my heart, consuming all desire to serve Him?” Terry prayed and pleaded.

Terry went into the living room and fashioned an altar. She went and picked up her sleeping daughter, and returning to the living room, she laid Kimmie upon the altar. Terry prayed, “Oh my Lord, I place my trust in Thee. If you are going to take my baby, take her. I can’t fight you any longer. Forgive me, Lord, for my lack of trust and obedience. I don’t understand why you are asking for my little girl, but I do love and trust you. Help me in the time ahead.”

Profound peace washed over her. The battle was over. The victory won. Six

weeks later the certification came. Kimmie had not been ill once. Kimmie was normal.

The doctors were scratching their heads in astonishment, but Terry knew. Just as Isaac had been returned to Abraham, so had Kimmie been returned to Terry.

Some of us are entering Lent, a time of prayer, fasting, repentance and reflection. Traditionally it is a time of giving up something. A time of sacrifice. What sacrifices do we make? Some of us are being called to potentially make the ultimate sacrifice of our lives. The United States is in the Middle East.

How many will be called upon to lay down their lives for friends and loved ones unselfishly?

Rationing has not been established. Will we give up something for Lent? Most people are willing to give up something they will not miss. . . vegetarians giving up red meat. . . dieters giving up desserts. . . non-smokers giving up cigarettes.

When we are not giving in to our cravings, we can concentrate on our relationship with our creator.

Hopefully and prayerfully none of us will find ourselves in Terry’s situation, but if we do, God will answer us.

On the other hand during this Lenten season, God can speak to us if we are willing and able to listen through our sacrifices, prayer and fasting.

U.S. troops better trained for chem-bio than Iraqis

Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - Army chemical and biological defense experts told the Pentagon press corps that if Saddam Hussein uses weapons of mass destruction, U.S. soldiers are trained and better equipped than the Iraqis or anyone else.

“I don’t want to overstate it, but we can operate 100 percent better in a chemical and biological environment than the Iraqis can,” said Maj. Gen. John Doesburg, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command.

During the one-hour press conference, media wanted the three-man panel to answer questions ranging from: Is it true that there are defective chemical and biological suits? How will the Iraqi desert climate and sand affect detection equipment? And is there still a problem with troops not being properly trained on how to operate their individual protection equipment?

Reporters also asked:

“Will the Iraqi president really use such weapons?”

Over the past six years the Army has developed 19 new chemical and biological defense systems, to include detectors and individual protection systems, such as the suit and mask, said Brig. Gen. Stephen Reeves, program executive officer for Chemical and Biological Defense for the Department of Defense.

Chem/bio suits, referred to as the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology or JSLIST, is one improvement that has been made since the Gulf War. It’s lighter than its predecessor, it dissipates heat more quickly and protects against all known or suspected chemical or biological agents, Reeves said.

Every soldier being deployed is issued two suits, Reeves said. Before issuance each suit was checked three times for defects, he said, and there are zero defects in the stockpile.

Since the Gulf War, five new biological detectors

have been produced. One of those detectors is the Standoff Chemical Agent Detector, which will detect chemical vapors out to five kilometers and is the first in the world, Reeves said. There’s also the Portal Shield, which is a semi-automated detector that is used at fixed sites around ports, airfields and bases. It can detect up to 10 different biological agents and give results within 15 minutes.

Other items that are being used to increase the life span of soldiers during a nuclear, biological or chemical attack are stockpiled vaccines for smallpox and anthrax, which are the principal threats, Reeves said. Also, individuals who specialize in NBC reconnaissance, decontamination and biological detection have been embedded in deployed units as a force protection measure.

“[In Kuwait] every company commander has a specialist advising him on how to develop training programs, and in the case of an attack the specialist would advise the com-

mander on what actions to take,” said Col. Thomas Spoehr, the commander of the 3rd Chemical Brigade, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

“Then there are teams moving around the battlefield providing support wherever it’s needed.”

With a force that’s so prepared for the worst, why would Saddam take the risk, reporters asked, waiting for a response that would be speculation.

“He’s used them in the past,” Doesburg said. “He probably has some grave reservations about using those chemical and biological agents, but we’re going to be prepared.”

“I had the displeasure of having been in Geneva, Switzerland, during the time that he was using chemical agents ... I will never forget the picture book that showed what exposure to mustard agent does ... Most disturbing was the women and children that were in that book,” Doesburg said.

New Mexico’s Bataan Memorial March canceled

Army News Service
WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, N.M. — The Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range, scheduled for March 30, 2003, has been canceled.

Due to the current world situation and extensive mili-

tary deployments among the units that support the march, the event cannot be safely and efficiently conducted, said event organizers.

For more information call 505-678-1256 or 505-678-1134 or send an e-mail to bataan@wsmr.army.mil.

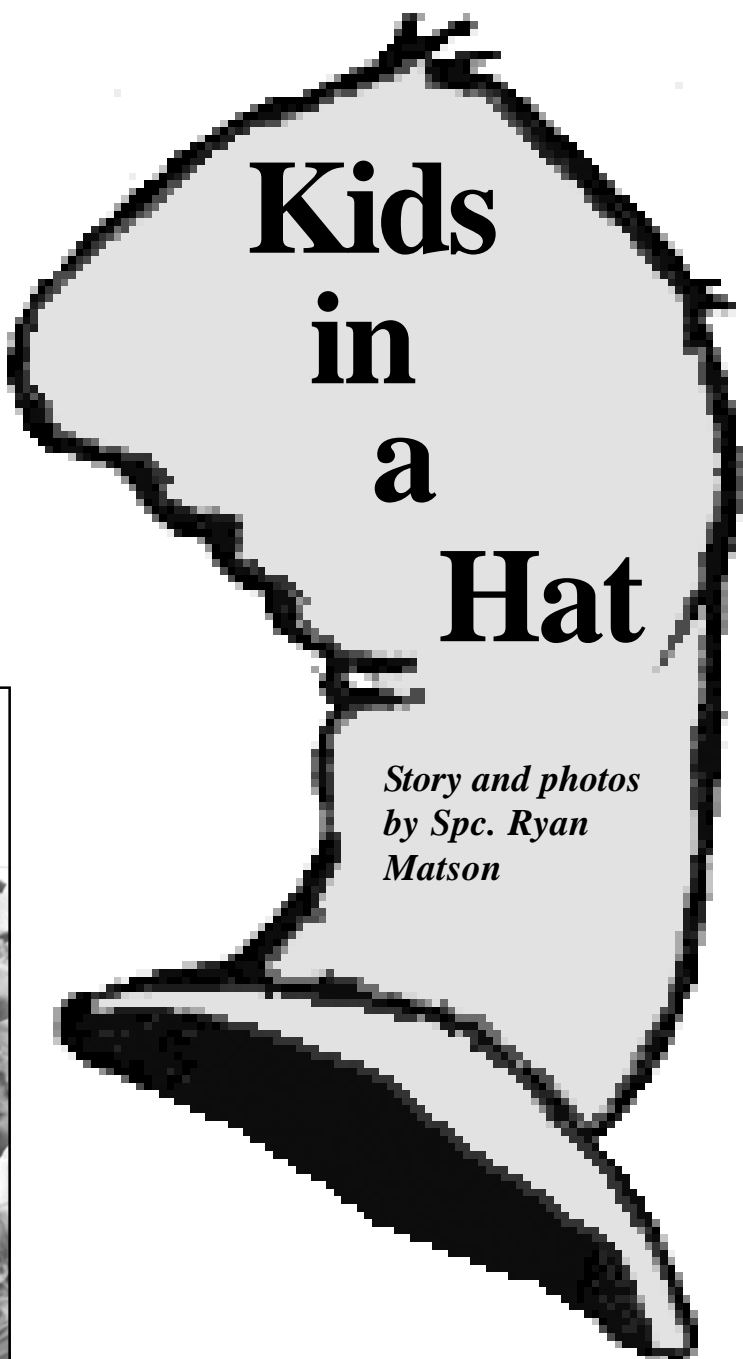
Pay adjustment delays centralization to MODERN

The following Headquarters Department of the Army guidance is disseminated on behalf of the Directorate of Human Resources reference a delay in the transformation to the Centralized Civilian Personnel Processing System also known as MODERN.

Timeline for resumption of the centralization project has not been received but will be published as soon as it is. Processing of civilian personnel actions should continue as normal until further guidance is received.

Army’s centralization of Human Resource databases delayed: Army’s transformation from Human Resource databases distributed at seven continental United States sites to consolidated databases at one central site has been delayed. The centralization project, which was scheduled to begin on March 7, is being delayed due to the workload associated with processing additional 1 percent pay adjustment recently signed by President Bush. The pay adjustment is retroactive to Jan. 12. As soon as guidance is received and the pay tables are available, the pay adjustment will be processed along with corrections to those personnel actions affecting pay that have been processed since Jan. 12. Upon completion of the pay processing, the centralization project will continue.

Spectrum



Hicks celebrates “Read Across America”/Dr. Seuss’ birthday with school children

“How old do you think I am?” Brig. Gen. Jan Hicks, commanding general, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon asked a room full of attentive 5-year-olds from a wooden rocking chair. “Twenty-four!” blurted out one excited youngster. “Not quite,” the general said with a chuckle. “Twenty-five!” shot out another. “I really like these kids!” the general said with a grin to some of the children’s teachers.

Hicks was breaking the ice with a group of kindergarten students at Tobacco Road Elementary School March 3. She had stopped by that morning to read to the children in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday and the national “Read Across America” campaign.

The general read to two groups of children, each made up of five separate classes. The first group, which was made up of five classes of kindergarten students, came in around 9 a.m., and the second group, made up of first grade students, came in about an hour later when Hicks had finished reading to the younger students.

Hicks selected Dr. Seuss’ 1990 book “Oh the Places You’ll Go!” to read to both classes.

Before she started reading to the youngsters, Hicks explained why she chose that particular Dr. Seuss book, which she later said was her favorite Dr. Seuss book.

“All of you are going to see these places when you grow up,” Hicks said. When describing Dr. Seuss, Hicks mentioned that Dr. Seuss actually served in the Army as a Signal soldier.

“That’s what I am, too,” Hicks told the kids. “I read that book before and he went to some scary places,” one little girl said.

“You’re going to find scary places, but you have friends to help you out,” Hicks told the girl. “In the Army, everybody has a battle buddy, and that keeps us from being scared.”

“I wanted to send the kids a message that there are a lot of things they’ll see in life - scary things, fun things, good things - and there’s a lot of decisions they’ll have to make,” Hicks said. “I wanted to tell them with a battle buddy or a friend, they’ll do just fine.”

Hicks came to the school in response to a query from Sharon Ray, a kindergarten teacher at the school who is also married to Drill Sgt. Anthony Ray, Company B, 447th Signal Battalion, here on post.

“I thought we have a lot of military children out here and that it might be a nice idea to ask the general to read to the children,” she said. “I acquired her e-mail address and e-mailed her a short letter explaining what I wanted to do and she responded back positively.”

In addition to the general’s visit to the kindergartners and first grade students, members of Company B, 447th Signal Battalion, also went throughout the school reading their favorite Dr. Seuss stories to children.

“Read Across America,” sponsored by the National Education Association, is set up in conjunction with Dr. Seuss’ birthday (March 2), but was celebrated March 3 this year because it fell on a weekend. Hicks had high praise for the program, and for reading with children in general.

“Reading sets you up for almost everything you’re going to do in the future - in school, in college, in a career” Hicks said. “It really is at the foundation of our children’s ability to do well, have confidence and make their way on their own. It’s a wonderful thing to do, and the kids will never cease to tickle you.”



U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Jan Hicks, during her visit to Tobacco Road Elementary School March 3. The general was visiting the school as part of “Read Across America” campaign / Dr. Seuss’ birthday celebration. Hicks selected Dr. Seuss’ “Oh the Places You’ll Go!” to read to the children.

Community Events

FEW

The Garden City Chapter of the Federally Employed Women will meet on **Wednesday**, at 11:30 in the Gordon Room of the Gordon Club on Fort Gordon.

This month's program will be presented by Fort Gordon's Equal Employment Opportunity Office. The topic will be current procedures and changes. You don't have to be a member to attend.

For more information call Judy Creer, at 791-4683.

Civilian of the quarter nominations

Nominations for the Fort Gordon Civilian of the Quarter for the quarter ending March 31 must be submitted by close of business **March 17**.

The narrative should not exceed two pages. Nominations will be for GS 5-8, NA 8-15, NL 8-13, NS 6-11, WG 5-7, WL 4-6, WS 1-2 and NF 2-3.

Send the nomination to DHR, via e-mail, **reidm@gordon.army.mil**.

For more information, call Mary Reid at 791-3840.

EWC monthly meetings

The Fort Gordon Enlisted Wives' Club's monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the fourth **Wednesday** of each month in Building 40705, 41st Street. Everyone is welcome, including civilian employees working at Fort Gordon.

The annual membership drive will be held **March 26**, in honor of Women's History Month.

For more information call Linda Holden, 854-9387 or Rosemary Marshall, 791-2675.

Green to gold

Reserve Officer Training Corps briefings will be presented by 2nd Lt. Eugene Irby III, in the Education and Career Development Division, Building 21606 at 1 p.m. **March 12, 19 and 26**. Limited seating.

For more information, call 791-2000 to reserve a seat.

Women's History Month

The command program for "Women's History Month" is **March 13**, at 1p.m. in Alexander Hall. The guest speaker for the program is Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Reserve, Command Sgt. Maj. Michele S. Jones.

For more information, call the Equal Opportunity Office at 791-2014/6455.

EWC scholarships

The Fort Gordon Enlisted Wives' Club scholarship

applications are in the counselor's office at all area high schools and available to all ID card holders. Deadline for submission is **April 30**.

For more information concerning scholarships, call Shirley Johnson at 791-7656 or Rosemary Marshall at 791-2675.

Education opportunity

The University of Maryland University College will provide resident graduate courses at Fort Gordon. Completion of the program results in six graduate credits toward several Information Technology masters' degree programs offered by UMUC. The next iteration of the Information Technology Graduate Seminar is **March 15 – May 17** with registration on going until **March 7**.

This program is open to all Fort Gordon personnel (military permanent party and students, civilians, and family members) and is supported by tuition assistance for military members. DoD Civilians in CP34 may request funding to pay for the seminars.

For more information or to register, call Maj. Alan Makowsky at 791-2267 or **alan.makowsky@us.army.mil**. Those civilians in CP34 should contact their Career Program Manager for information about funding.

Volunteers needed

The Special Olympics are held on the installation annually and normally supported by the 93rd Signal Brigade. This year the garrison commander is asking for volunteers to step forward and support this event, because of the 93rd's deployment. The number of volunteers needed is three hundred but all who volunteer will be afforded the opportunity to help.

The games will be held on lower Barton Field (vicinity of the quarter mile track) on **March 26**, beginning at 10 a.m. The rain date will be **March 27**.

For more information or to volunteer, call Master Sgt. John Boutte at 791-9841.

CMU registration

Central Michigan University's College of Extended Learning at Fort Gordon offers a master of science in administration degree with concentrations in information resource management, health services administration and human resource administration. Registration for classes starting in March will be held through **March 14**.

For additional information, call 798-5739 or visit the CMU office in the Fort Gordon Education Center,

Building 21606, Barnes Avenue.

FCC training

The Family Child Care Program will have a training class **April 14** in Building 45400. The registration dates to sign up will be **March 17- 21** from 9:30 a.m. - noon in Building 45400 on 45th Street.

For more information, call 791-3993/4440.

Vehicle registration new hours

To better serve our soldiers, civilians, family members and retirees, the Vehicle Registration Office in Darling Hall is extending its hours. Personnel are reminded to bring their state vehicle registration (registered in the name of person registering vehicle or notarized letter authorizing someone else to register the vehicle), proof of insurance, ID card, and valid driver's license.

New hours of operation are as followed: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 7 a.m - 4 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed Saturdays, Sundays and federal holidays.

For more information, call 791-3132.

Yard sale

The "Great American" yard sale takes place **March 22**, from 9 a.m - 3 p.m. Sales will take place in the following housing areas: Gordon Terrace, Maglin Terrace, Olive Terrace and McNair Terrace.

World-wide merchandise will be available for purchase without leaving the country.

The Central Savannah River Area community is welcome and may enter through Gates 1, 2 and 5.

For more informtion, call Master Sgt. John Boutte at 791-9841.

DVDs at Woodworth

DVDs are now available for check-out at the Woodworth Library. This new collection, featuring both old favorites and classics, is located in the CD area of the library. DVDs may be checked out for a period of two weeks, with no renewals. There is a limit of two DVDs.

For more information, call 791-7323.

Warrant officer meeting

Fort Gordon will host the semi-annual Warrant Officer Leader Development Council meeting, **March 25 - 27**.

The meeting will review and address potential issues and develop courses of action from the Army's systems, policies and

programs that affect warrant officer leader development.

Representatives from all warrant officer proponent offices, National Guard and Reserve components are expected to attend.

For more information, call Chief Warrant Officer Frank Pizzi at 791-8183.

AFCEA scholarships

The Augusta-Fort Gordon Chapter, Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association, is taking applications for college scholarships to be awarded in May.

Graduating high school seniors who have been accepted to a university and current college students can get an application on the website, **www.afcea-augusta.org**.

Deadline is April 1. The application should be mailed to:

AFCEA Scholarships, Augusta-Fort Gordon Chapter, P.O. Box 8054, Fort Gordon, GA 30905.

Eligible students must be full-time, majoring in computer science, electronics, engineering or a related science field. ROTC students are eligible regardless of major.

The selected applicants will be awarded \$1000 scholarships. The top applicant is to receive the \$2000 Mallette Scholarship.

For information, call Mary Jones at 791-2014.

Operation Ready

A class on "Building Your Family Readiness Groups" will be held on **March 11**, from 9 a.m. - noon, in ACS, Darling Hall, Room 367.

"Rear Detachment Commander Training" is scheduled for **March 19**, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Gordon Club, Ground Zero on the bottom floor.

To register and for additional information, call 791-3579.

Safety office moves

The Signal Branch Safety Office has moved out of the Military Police Station and relocated to Building 33720, Darling Hall, Room 155.

Telephone numbers and duty hours remain the same.

OWC

Officers' Wives' Club offers Bunco **March 11** at the Gordon Club. Social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. and dinner is served at 7 p.m.

For more information, call Connie Hook at 869-8231or Ann Iwancio 863-9789.

OWC II

The thrift shop picks up and takes in donations.

Drop off your donations at thrift shop or contact Monnie Castro at 481-8065 for pick

ups.

Vehicle registration

A reminder to all service members and authorized personnel possessing a valid DoD decal. You are required to notify the vehicle registration office when changing vehicle license plates on your vehicle.

Failure to do so could result in delays while attempting entry onto Fort Gordon or having your vehicle towed during heightened Force Protection Condition measures.

The vehicle registration office is located in Darling Hall, Room 151.

Dinner theatre

Comedy Night at the Fort Gordon Dinner Theatre with "The Disgruntled Clown"

and comedian Dave Ugly is open to the public, ages 18 and above **March 15**.

The two shows begin at 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 per person. Also available is a cash bar and snacks.

For tickets or more information, call the Box Office at 793-8552.

Family classes

Blended families class is **Monday** from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in Darling Hall Room 367.

The class focuses on the step-family structure, identifying strengths and weaknesses in relationships and assist in building a stronger family.

For more information or to register, call Renee Williams at 791-0794/7557.

The School Yard



Richmond County Testing Schedule

March 11-17: Makeup testing for elementary and middle schools.
March 24-27: Georgia High School Graduation Test

Columbia County Testing Schedule

March 11-21: Standardized testing for grades 3, 5 and 8.
March 24-28: Georgia High School Graduation Test

The Georgia High School Graduation Test

The knowledge and skills assessed on the graduation tests were selected by Georgia educators, including high school teachers and curriculum specialists. They are based on the learning objectives specified in the Quality Core Curriculum for grades 9-12, as established by the State Board of Education.

For more information on the Georgia High School Graduation Test, visit **www.doe.k12.ga.us**.

Fort Gordon Report



C O M M U N I C A T I O N S
The newest edition of the "Fort Gordon Report" premieres **March 10** and includes the following stories:

- Two More Units Deploy From Fort Gordon
- Drill Sergeant of the Year Competition and Awards
- Food Show and Wine Tasting

The "Fort Gordon Report" and "Army Newswatch" alternate weeks on *Charter Cable Channel 13*: Mondays and Thursdays at 7:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Fridays at 7 a.m., 12 p.m., 5 p.m., 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 6:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m., 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays at 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

You can catch the latest "Fort Gordon Report" on *Comcast Cable Channel 66* on: Mondays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 9 p.m., Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30 a.m.

The newest edition of "Army Newswatch" will premiere **March 17**.

The "Fort Gordon Report" is the Signal Center's official television news program and is produced on post by the Fort Gordon Public Affairs Office and the Training and Support Center.

Watch the "Fort Gordon Report" for the stories that matter in your community and throughout your Army!

MPs in Kuwait train for guarding EPWs

Spc. Katherine Robinson
Army News Service

CAMPNEWYORK, Kuwait — To prepare for what may come, soldiers in Kuwait are learning how to deal with enemy prisoners of war. Internment and resettlement training was conducted by the 3rd Military Police Battalion (Provisional) Feb. 17 and 18 in preparation for possible future operations. The battalion normally provides law enforcement and emergency services support for Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, Ga. Additionally, the battalion trains military police units for deployments either by air, sea or rail to contingency areas in order to support the 18th Airborne Corps, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) and Forces Command missions.

Master Sgt. Tony McGee, 3rd Infantry Division Provost Marshal operations sergeant, said handling of enemy prisoners of war is one of the MPs main missions. "It consumes most of what we do," he said.

The battalion set up a central collection point on Camp New York. The area was divided into several sections, exactly as it would be in a real-world situation, except on a significantly smaller scale, said McGee, a native of Florence, S.C.

The MPs learned to maintain security, transfer and account for prisoners, their belongings and their weapons.

"These guys' ability to handle that number and do it proficiently is extremely important. We've got to get (the prisoners) off the battlefield and protect them."

As part of the training, the MPs received a simulated report along with a grid coordinate giving the location of EPWs. They then moved out to pick up the "prisoners," who were role-played by other MPs.

At forward collection points, the soldiers corralled the prisoners, searched them for weapons and took them to the central collection point in troop carriers.

There, EPWs were met at the gate by an initial reception security team, a squad of MPs who searched them again, and moved them in to either the consolidated holding area or, if they needed medical attention, an aid station.

From there, another squad took the prisoners to a search area for a third and more detailed search, then moved them



Photo by 3rd Infantry Division

A line of simulated enemy soldiers, played by MPs, sit waiting to be transported to the central collection point during internment training in Kuwait.

through inprocessing where EPWs had their personal items inventoried and paperwork filled out. They received two Meals-Ready-to-Eat, a bottle of water and a blanket. They also received bracelets with numbers that corresponded to their paperwork.

While some of their belongings were temporarily confiscated, to be returned upon release, the prisoners were allowed to keep badges of rank and nationality, religious literature and items of personal or sentimental nature.

Under constant guard, the prisoners were taken from inprocessing to a segregated holding area, divided in to sections for officers, noncommissioned officers and enlisted soldiers. Finally, they ended up in a barracks area, divided the same way.

Treating the EPWs correctly while handling them efficiently is very important, said Command Sgt. Maj. Charles D. Medley, 3rd MP Bn. command sergeant major, from Huntsville, Ala.

"One of the primary differences between the United States Army and many of our adversaries is that we treat EPWs with dignity and respect while maintaining security," he said. "We reinforce that with the MPs constantly. EPWs are soldiers, they're on the other side, but they're still human beings ... they will receive the

same medical care as a U.S. Army soldier."

Sometimes enemy soldiers who surrender will do anything to cooperate because they're hungry and thirsty, said Pvt. 2 Ashley Hargett, an MP from Hutchinson, Kan.

"I learned that some will resist and often that's because they're scared. You have to be aware of your surroundings," she said.

Hargett said the training helped her know what to possibly expect.

"It's good training. It lets us know what we need to do and what we need to change," she said. "As far as training goes, it could always benefit you."

Though she's nervous about the prospect of having to put her training to use in a real-world situation, Hargett said she's not scared. "I have a lot of confidence in my team. My team knows what they're doing. There's a lot of experience here."

Though many of the MPs have been deployed for several months, Medley said there has been no complaining.

"We're here to do a job, and when it's finished, we'll be glad to go home," he said. "I've had zero soldiers complain ... I couldn't be prouder."

Editors' Note: *Spc. Katherine Robinson is a member of the 50th Public Affairs Detachment.*

EAMC observes Patient Awareness Week March 9-15

Eisenhower Army Medical Center

Everyone has a role in making health care safe - physicians, health care executives, nurses and technicians. Health care organizations across the country are working to make health care safety a priority. You, as a patient, can also play a vital role in making your care safe by becoming an active, involved and informed member of your health care team.

An Institute of Medicine report has identified the occurrence of medical errors as a serious problem in the health care system. The IOM recommends, among other things, that a concerted effort be made to improve the public's awareness of the problem.

The "Speak Up" program at Eisenhower Army Medical Center during the week of March 9 - 15 is sponsored by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and urges patients to get involved in their care.

Such efforts to increase consumer awareness and involvement are supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This initiative provides simple advice



on how you, as the patient, can make your care a positive experience. After all, research shows that patients who take part in decisions about their health care are more likely to have better outcomes.

Note: Below is a sampling of the brochure available at EAMC during Patient Awareness Week.

Speak Up: Help Prevent Errors in Your Care

Speak up if you have questions or concerns, and if you don't understand, ask again. It's your body and you have a right to know.

- Your health is too important to worry about being embarrassed if you don't understand something that your doctor, nurse or other health care professional tells you.

- Don't be afraid to ask about safety. For example, how does your doctor verify the accuracy of your lab tests?

- Don't hesitate to tell the health care professional if you think he or she has confused you with another patient.

Pay attention to the care you are receiving. Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medications by the right health care professionals. Don't assume anything.

- Tell your nurse or doctor or lab technologist if something doesn't seem quite right.

- Don't be afraid to tell the nurse or the doctor if you think you are about to receive the wrong test. Terminology is very important, for example, if you think you are supposed to receive a "potassium test" and the lab professional calls it a "chemistry panel," speak up immediately.

- Expect health care workers to introduce themselves when they enter your room or approach you and look

for their identification badges.

- Notice whether your caregivers have washed their hands. Hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infections. Don't be afraid to gently remind a doctor, nurse or lab technologist to do this.

- If you are having a blood specimen collected, ask the lab technologist if you don't understand the procedure.

- Make sure the laboratory confirms your identity. Ensure that the specimen is properly labeled with your full name and other identifiers at the time it is collected. If it's a Pap smear, are the slides sealed at the time they are collected to prevent

New program to help soldiers find 'hardhat' jobs 'Operation Viper' begins

Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — A new program, called "Helmets to Hardhats," was launched in January to help soldiers find commercial construction jobs.

The intent of the program is to help those with military experience get hired in civilian construction trades that the program's organizers claim are facing a critical labor shortage.

Soldiers who leave full-time military service, as well as current members of the National Guard, the Army Reserve and the four other reserve components, are eligible for assistance from the federally-funded program.

"The construction industry needs to recruit 1.6 million new workers over the next five years to replace those people who will be leaving the labor force," said officials from The Center for Military Recruitment, Assessment and Veterans, citing several federal and industry projections. "Over 40 percent of the work force will retire in the next 10 years."

The center launched Helmets to Hardhats in January after a \$3.4 million appropriation for the pilot program was approved by Congress as part of the 2003

Defense Appropriations Act. Matthew Caulfield, a retired Marine Corps major general, and his son Dan, a former Marine Corps officer, who served during the Persian Gulf War, are the program's principal organizers.

"We need people to maintain our infrastructure, our roads and bridges and dams," the general said. "The way we're going, in 10 years we won't have enough iron workers. What better source of people to bring into the construction industry than those who have already been trained in the military?"

Helmets to Hardhats officials hope to recruit 23,000 people into the industry during its first year and 166,000 during the next two years.

The program emphasizes jobs that offer higher than average wages and benefits. A recent national survey indicates that union workers earn an average of \$4.08 more per hour than do other construction workers.

It is also a way for the construction industry to find new workers who have already acquired the discipline and dependability as well as the leadership skills and the safety training that is stressed by the military.

"This is a match made in heaven, but the construction and military organizations don't know each other very well. We have to educate employers about what the military does," Dan Caulfield explained. "We believe that Helmets to Hardhats can do that."

The 16-member staff, including five field recruiters and many more field trades consultants, is currently carrying some key messages to 15 unions, with more than 7,000 locals that form the AFL-CIO's Building and Construction Trades Department.

One message is that veterans want work. The unemployment rate among military veterans is three times higher than the national average. That included a 14.8 percent unemployment rate among veterans between 20-24 years old during the first quarter of 2002.

Another is that former soldiers offer the construction industry a stable work force, looking for good jobs and careers without having to go to college or enroll in a training program.

"They join the service when they're 18 and single, and they leave three or four years later married and with

a couple of kids," Dan Caulfield pointed out. "Johnny doesn't need a training program. Johnny needs a job."

Union apprenticeship programs make it possible for veterans and reservists to learn a trade while they're earning a good living, the Caulfields stressed. And the lessons they learned while in uniform could make it possible for the new workers to begin their apprenticeships at a higher level than people who have never worked before, they added.

Helmets to Hardhats can also help recruiting, its advocates believe, by ensuring people who are thinking about joining the military that they will be able to use their training to get a good job when they return to the civilian world. "This puts a market place value on military skills, and we're here for you when you're ready," Dan Caulfield said.

More information about the program and on-line registration can be found at www.helmetstohardhats.org.

Editor's note: *Master Sgt. Bob Haskell writes for the National Guard Bureau.*

Cpl. Keith A. Kluwe
Army News Service

BAGHRAN VALLEY, Afghanistan — Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division and supporting elements who air-assaulted into the southern end of Baghran Valley Feb. 19 to begin "Operation Viper" ended up recovering caches of hidden weapons.

Baghran Valley is in the mountainous Hemand Province northwest of Kandahar Air Base. The goal of Operation Viper was to search villages in the valley and recover weapons caches and other war material left by hostile Taliban and Al Qaeda forces, officials said. Coalition forces were involved in the search as well.

Soldiers of the operation met with less resistance than they were expecting, said paratroopers on the ground. There were no coalition forces soldiers wounded or killed during Operation Viper, but they said that didn't mean things were safe for soldiers in the field.

"When I search a home, I open the door and hope nobody inside is armed," said Spc. Jonathon Kohnen, a paratrooper with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. "I do my job and look for weapons and ammunition - stuff they shouldn't have. I try to be pretty decent and not tear up the

place." Civil affairs soldiers contacted village leaders - with the help of local interpreters - and asked for permission to search homes in the village and cooperation during the house-to-house search. "We have to search everything; false walls and things like that. We want to be respectful but we have to do our job. We have to be thorough to find anything," said Pickler.

More than 20 rifles of various types, a machine gun and more than 2,000 rounds of ammunition and other war materials were confiscated during the searches on the first day.

Soldiers, interpreters and civilian media reporters were camped throughout the valley where temperatures during night fell below freezing. Daytime temperatures were comfortable and the skies were clear.

Operation Viper interrupted day-to-day activities of hostile elements in the valley, said one of the commanders.

"The leadership of the Taliban is on the run and are not functioning as well as they were yesterday," said Lt. Col. Charles A. Flynn, 2/504th PIR commander. "We're disrupting their activity and denying them their ability to operate."

Editor's note: *Cpl. Keith A. Kluwe is a member of the 109th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.*

Sports & Leisure

Sports UPDATE

AER Golf Tournament

The 15th Signal Brigade is sponsoring a four-person scramble golf tournament **March 14** to benefit AER. The tournament includes a lunch buffet.

The cost of entry is \$20 for all Gordon Lakes Golf Course members and \$30 for all others.

Check-in starts at 10:30 a.m., followed by an 11 a.m. lunch. The shotgun start will be at 12:30 p.m.

Golfers can sign up for the tournament by calling Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Millward at 791-5913, or reaching him via e-mail at millwart@gordon.army.mil. Sign-ups run through noon on **March 11**.

Masters badge lottery

A limited number of badges for this year's Masters golf tournament in Augusta will be awarded through a lottery on post. Only active duty military personnel assigned to Fort Gordon may enter the lottery.

To enter the lottery register through **March 21** between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in Room 260 of Darling Hall, Monday through Friday. An active duty military ID card must be presented to enter the lottery.

Gordon Lanes happenings

On **March 15**, Gordon Lanes will host Glow Bowling. The cost is \$3.25 per game, plus \$1.50 shoe rental.

Gordon Lanes will host a Pizza Bowl night **March 20**. The night will include a \$3 pizza buffet and free game playing from 5:30 - 7 p.m. There will also be free bowling from 7 - 8:30 p.m.

For more information on either event, call 791-3446.

Hunting and fishing permits

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources will accept letters of application until **March 15** for a random drawing of 250 permits for hunting and fishing on post. The permits are designed for people not associated with Fort Gordon.

The letter should request entry into the public access drawing for Fort Gordon and include the applicant's full name, address, social security number, date of birth and phone number.

Applicants must be 16 years of age or older to apply. All applicants must possess a valid Georgia Hunter Safety card or its equivalent.

The letter of application should be sent to:

Georgia Dept of Natural Resources, Attn: Fort Gordon Hunt, 142 Bob Kirk Road, Thomson, GA 30824.

For more information, call Ken Boyd at 706-791-2397.

Ladies golf schedule

Thursdays are ladies golf days at Gordon Lakes Golf Course. Tee time is 9 a.m.

For more information, call Pauline Blandeburgo at 863-3747.

Bowling for soldiers

AUSA holds annual Bowl-a-thon at Gordon Lanes



Photos courtesy of Bob Snead

U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Jan Hicks (left), and Chief of Staff, Col. Jeffrey Foley (right) enjoy the 9th Annual AUSA Bowl-a-thon at Gordon Lanes.

Spec. Ryan Matson
Sports editor

Though it may not have been as successful as past tournaments, there is one thing Bob Snead, coordinator for this year's AUSA Bowl-a-thon, said bowlers who participate in the tournament can always count on.

"It's a fundraiser, but I only do it because it's fun," Snead said. "That's one thing that never changes. It was the same in that everyone who came out had a good time. I always ask people as they're leaving, 'Did you have a good time?' and you always get this bubbly answer, 'Oh yeah! We had a great time!'"

This year's Bowl-a-thon, which took place Feb. 28 to March 1 (it is always held the first weekend in March) at Gordon Lanes, was the Ninth Annual AUSA fund-raising tournament, all of which Snead has coordinated.

He said though the tournament will not reach last year's level of contributions, he estimates between \$1,500 and \$2,000, after expenses was raised from this year's tournament.

Bob Damen, president of the Greater Augusta/Fort Gordon AUSA chapter, explained where the money raised from the tournament will go.

"With the money we raise from the Bowl-a-thon, and the golf tournaments we hold, we donate money to several things on post," Damen said. "We give cash awards to quarterly board winners on post, and contribute to many organizations on post such as the Chaplain's fund, the Fisher House and the Christmas House."

"AUSA also donated money to support soldiers who remained on post during the Christmas Exodus."

"Our biggest expense, however, is taking the outstanding soldiers identified on post to the AUSA annual conference in Washington, D.C., each year," Snead said this year's tour-

nement drew 110 bowlers, mainly in five-person teams, although some teams may have been lacking a bowler or two.

"The teams were varied in where they came from," Snead said.

The 369th Signal Battalion drew the most teams for the tournament. They gathered five teams to bowl in the tournament, two of which were advanced individual training soldiers, the rest of which were permanent party.

Lt. Kendra Allen, Company D, 369th Signal Battalion, was the point-of-contact for the battalion.

"When I got the information on the tournament, the first thing I did was go to the barracks, because I knew our command group would field a team," she said.

"I asked the soldiers if they would participate, that they would get the morning off PT, and I told them the theme for the tournament and they looked at it as a contribution to AUSA."

"Since many of the soldiers were Phase Four, it was also a chance for them to do something fun. Some of them said they hadn't bowled in two years."

Lt. Col. Dwayne Williams, 369th Signal Battalion commander who also bowled in the tournament, said the turn-out reflected the initiative of the battalion's soldiers.

"I'm always willing to help AUSA in any way possible," he said. "We didn't particularly shoot for having the most teams, just to allow people the opportunity to participate in a fun event. I guess having the most people shows there are a number of people in the battalion who feel the same way."

Aside from the 369th Signal Battalion teams, Snead said the 15th Signal Brigade had a headquarters team, and the 551st Signal Battalion had several teams. One of these teams was headed by U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, Brig. Gen. Jan Hicks, and included Chief of Staff Col. Jeffrey Foley and

Command Sgt. Major Michael Terry and their spouses.

"Everybody bowled pretty well and had a phenomenal time," Terry said.

The 551st Signal Battalion also fielded a team made up of the French, German and Canadian liaisons and NCO. Snead said the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course had two partial bowling teams, General Dynamics fielded five teams with a total of 22 bowlers, and Johnson Controls, Raytheon and the Gordon Highway Holiday Inn each fielded a team. In addition, Snead said three local community members came in and bowled as a team.

Snead said the only thing that surprised him was the rather low number of AIT soldiers who attended this year's tournament.

"With Saturday being such a rainy day, I expected more would come out," he said.

The bowler with the top score over three games and the team that raised the most money were awarded special prizes, Snead said. He said the high-score bowler for this year's tournament was former All-Army bowler and golfer and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Chuck Withers, who rolled a 651-pin total over three games. The team with the highest money collected total is still being calculated, Snead said.

While the top bowler and highest grossing team received prizes, Snead said that every bowler who participated was also awarded a prize donated from the tournaments corporate sponsors. Snead said these prizes ranged from an overnight stay for two at the Gordon Highway Holiday Inn with breakfast, golf shirts, to mag-lite flashlights.

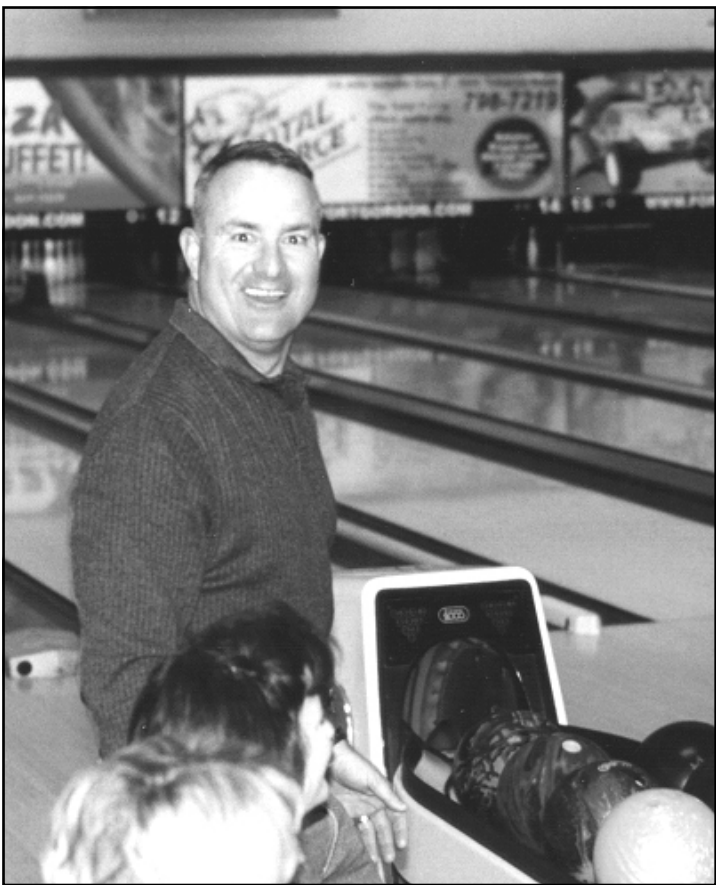
"That was sort of a shock, a nice surprise (everyone received prizes)," Allen said. "The soldiers were very happy."

Besides being a fun event, Terry summed up why he thought the event is important each year.

"Because AUSA supports every soldier in the United States Army," he said.



(Above) Foley rolls a ball during the AUSA tournament held Feb. 28 to March 1.
(Below) Post Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Terry, who bowled on a team with Hicks and Foley, prepares to bowl.



Young bowler honored for his achievement

Denise Allen
Staff writer

Three times a week, Charles Withers II can be found bowling.

A member of the Four Soldiers team on a Saturday bowling league at Gordon Lanes, the 15 year-old Glenn Hills High School student has been bowling since he was 6 years old. On Jan. 15, he did what some bowlers never accomplish in a lifetime. He bowled a perfect game.

"After the ninth strike, they were telling me to announce it, but I told them no," said his mother, Marie Withers, who is the sergeant at arms with the Augusta Young American Bowling Alliance Association.

That was probably a good idea, because around the ninth frame was the time when Charles got a little nervous.

On Feb. 22, members of the Georgia State YABA and Augusta's YABA honored the teen during the opening ceremonies of the association's championship with plaques and a ring for his performance.

Another 15 year-old, Octavious Jackson, who bowled a 300 on Feb. 15 at the AMF Masters Lanes on Gordon Highway, was also recognized at the ceremony.

"These are the two youngest in Augusta YABA to bowl 300," said Robert Cook, president of the Georgia State YABA. It's been six or eight years since anyone in the Augusta YABA Association has bowled a perfect game.

Charles' dedication to his sport enhances his innate talent, passed down to him by his parents, Marie and Charles Withers Sr., who are also avid bowlers.

The couple met in a bowling alley

While neither of them has ever bowled a perfect game, each one has had plenty of bowling honors. His mother won a silver medal in the Georgia Games last summer, and his father was the Regions Cup senior player of the year last year.

Charles' mother signed him up in a league at the age of 6, and he said he enjoys the sport.

"It's a great sport," said Charles, who usually bowls around a 188. "I like doing it when I don't have anything else to do."

Not only was he recognized for his perfect game, but Charles was named Gordon Lanes Bowler of the Year.

At the Movies

The Signal Theater is open Thursday-Sunday. All shows begin at 6:30 p.m. The late show on Saturday begins at 9:30 p.m. Children 12 and over and all adults are \$3. Children 6-11 are \$1.50. Children under 5 are free.
For movie listings and times, call 791-3982.

March 7 - 9
Friday - A Guy Thing (PG-13)
Saturday - Kangaroo Jack (PG-13)
Late show - Darkness Falls (PG-13)
Sunday - Kangaroo Jack (PG-13)

Note: Attendance at Fort Gordon's movie theater is strictly limited to authorized Post Exchange patrons.

‘Soldier helping their own’

Army Emergency Relief is a private nonprofit organization incorporated in 1942 by the Secretary of War and the Army Chief of Staff. AER’s mission is to provide emergency financial assistance.

Who does AER help?

- Active duty soldiers, single or married, and their dependents
- Army National Guard and United States Army Reserves soldiers on active duty for more than 30 days and their dependents
- Soldiers retired from active duty for longevity or physical disability, and their dependents
- ARNG and USAR soldiers who retired at age 60, and their dependents
- Surviving spouses and orphans of soldiers who died while on active duty or after they retired

What can AER do?

- Help with emergency financial needs for:
 - Food, rent or utilities
 - Emergency transportation and vehicle repair
 - Funeral expenses
 - Medical/dental expenses
 - Personal needs when pay is delayed or stolen
- Give undergraduate-level education scholarships, based primarily on financial need, to children of soldiers

What can’t AER do?

- Help pay for nonessentials
- Finance ordinary leave or vacation
- Pay fines or legal expenses
- Help liquidate or consolidate debt
- Assist with house purchase or home improvements
- Help purchase, rent or lease a vehicle
- Cover bad checks or pay credit card bills

How long does it take to get AER help?

You can expect a quick decision on your request for assistance.

What kind of assistance can I expect?

- An interest-free loan
- A grant (an outright gift of funds) if repayment of loan will cause undue hardship
- Or, part loan and part grant

Is there a dollar limit on AER help?

No. AER assistance will meet your emergency need.

Do I have to contribute to AER to get help?

No. If you are eligible for AER assistance and have a valid emergency need, AER will help you.

Does AER get its money from the government?

No. AER does not receive any appropriated or nonappropriated government money.

Where does AER get its funds?

- Voluntary contributions from active and retired soldiers
- Repayment of AER interest-free loans
- Income from investments
- Unsolicited contributions

What portion of my contribution goes to help soldiers?

91cents of every dollar contributed goes to help soldiers; AER expenses cost only 9 cents.

How can you help AER?

- Know about AER and how to get AER help when you have a financial emergency
- Ensure your family members know about AER
- Give your spouse a power

of attorney for emergency use

- Remind other soldiers, who have financial emergencies, about AER
- Support AER with contributions
- Encourage others to contribute to AER

How do I find AER when I need help?

- First, see your unit commander
- Then, go to your AER Section
- If there is no AER Section, go to any of the following:
 - American Red Cross Chapter
 - Air Force Aid Society Section
 - Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Auxiliary
 - Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Office

What should I bring with me?

- Military ID card
- Leave and Earnings Statement
- Leave/PCS orders
- Substantiating documents (car repair estimate, rental agreement, utility bill, etc.)

Editor’s note: *The above information was compiled from the following website: <http://www.ddeamc.amedd.army.mil/wwwroot/Visitor/volunteer/aer.htm>.*



Photo by Spc. Ryan Matson

Annual Army Emergency Relief drive begins

Diane Sarber, AER officer for the post, addresses a group of AER coordinators, to explain how to fill out contribution forms and garner support for AER. AER, whose slogan is “Soldiers helping their own,” solicits soldiers for contributions to help their fellow service members in times of need.

Youth Services staff learn computer skills

Chris Walker

Special to The Signal

As a Training and Doctrine Command recommended course, the importance of the Computer Literacy Class is to provide Children and Youth Services staff with a clear understanding of the basic principles of computer operation and technology. By doing this, teachers and caregivers are better able to assist students in the computer lab as well as in the classroom.

The comprehensive six-month course was designed to introduce or improve basic computer skills in the use of the Internet, Windows, Word, Excel, Power Point, and Access.

This was a TRADOC pilot program, and the students graduating were the first to complete the comprehensive six-month course.

The graduation ceremony took place on March 3. Awards were presented by James T. Green, director of Community Activities and Judith Williams, chief of Children

and Youth Services Division.

Although 15 students began the course five completed it. Among the students of the 2002/2003 graduating class were: Valerie Johnson, Lorraine F. Willis, Pamela Rachal, Joe Poteet and Milagros Brown.

The class was facilitated and instructed by Chris Walker, School Age Services, Computer Lab Tech/Instructor, and Linda Givens.

The program also gave the students the confidence to work everyday on the computer. Many now use e-mail on a daily basis

and use their other learned skills to enhance their classrooms.

“It’s so wonderful not to be afraid of the computer,” Willis said.

Upon completion of the course teachers are better able to assist children in their homework, school projects, research activities and computer skill development.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Pam Lyons

Lorraine Willis presents Linda Givens with a “Teacher Recognition and Appreciation Award,” from the graduates of Children and Youth Services, Adult Computer Literacy Course.